

First Congregational United Church of Christ

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God,
we open our doors and hearts to all, in service and love as modeled by Jesus Christ.*



*Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Nine o'clock in the Morning*

The Worship of God

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by God's holiness; the nourishment of the mind with God's truth; the purifying of the imagination by God's beauty; the opening of the heart to God's love; the surrender of the will to God's purpose—all of this gathered up in adoration.

~William Temple

The Prologue

As we enter fully the fall season with all the warm and fuzzy autumnal images now beautifully surrounding us, in the congregational life of many steeples an emphasis on stewardship becomes a dominant theme characterized by some type of campaign or drive. Every church, no matter how well organized or loosely connected, is an institution in and of itself, exhibiting all the normal characteristics that institutional constructs convey, every aspect commensurate with institutional dynamics. The anonymous letter writer of the epistle to the Hebrews reminds readers then and now that in every way imaginable the human creature is fully exposed before God, nothing hidden, all our motivations and behaviors always transparent, readily on display. In the Witness from the Gospels in Mark we read a disturbing and shocking story about a man who was truly, genuinely, trying to do the right thing as a person of faith. His question for the ages about gaining eternal life still haunts and informs anyone who dares to follow Jesus.

Gathering Music

The Call to Worship and Welcome

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.

And also with you!

The Music for Contemplation

The Lamb

Gerald Coleman; arr. Susan Geschke

Chime Choir: Susan Krivichi, director

The Lighting of the Altar Candles

The Gathering

Approach humbly the throne of the One called almighty, the seat of mercy and grace that sustains us against the thick darkness of all our doubts and fears!

With as bold of faith as we can muster, we come before the One in whom no creature is hidden, the One who sees us and knows us completely!

Seek the Holy in this sacred place, gathering before a God shrouded in mystery, hidden from our eyes, yet somehow wonderfully perceptible at the depths of our being!

Our hearts yearn for the One who sustains us when we are weak and faint of heart, the One who delivers us from evil and delights in our humanity!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 326 *Thy Word Is a Lamp* words, Amy Grant; music, Michael W. Smith

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

To the One named as almighty, we gather before you to worship the One enthroned on the praises of all creation; as an often frail people who sometimes feel more forsaken than graced by your loving presence, we long to perceive you in our midst; in times of trouble, God of eternal presence, you seem far removed from our predicament as if we have been forsaken; draw near to us in this place, God of our night and day, for our trust is in you; be with us as we express our many needs, as we approach you with all the boldness of faith we can muster; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

*The Opening Hymn, No. 66 *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* ST. DENIO

*The Litany of Praise

We lift our praise and worship to the God of all nations, offering our glad tidings to the One enthroned on the praises of faithful people everywhere!

We offer our gifts of adoration to the One in whom our ancestors trusted, the One who delivered our forebearers in faith in their times of need!

God hears our cries, bringing salvation to all humanity, assuring us that no one is ever put to shame, even when we believe we are undeserving of the love of God!

Our trust is in God, the One who never forsakes us, but strengthens us with the presence of the Holy, reminding us that God is with us and delights in us!

God delivers the faithful to safety, rescuing all who cry for help, delivering all humanity, delighting in every human creature!

Amidst all the troubles of life and living, the Holy One is near, the help of God close at hand, the steadfast love of the Holy One a sure and certain shield! Praise the Lord!

*The Gloria

GREATOREX

*Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Comforter!
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end! Amen! Amen!*

The Call to Confession¹

The word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. We cannot hide from God but must render an account to our creator. Come then, to confess the sin and doubts that seek to cripple our lives. In the sacred silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

Many times we feel forsaken and terrified more than supported and comforted. Sometimes, we cry out and perceive that we hear no answers. We are tempted to blame God even though we are the ones who cut off communication. Have mercy on us and help us in our time of need.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news! Remember that Jesus shared our common lot and is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. The man of Nazareth was tempted as we are tempted. Our confessions, both those spoken and those without voice, are no surprise to the Christ, who is our great high priest. Yet we are counted as brothers and sisters in the faith and offered abundant grace and mercy. For God, all things are possible. We are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Nancy Diepenbrock

The Anthem *O Jesus, I Have Promised* words, John E. Bode; music, David Catherwood
Choral Ensemble

The Witness from the Epistles

HEBREWS 4:12-16

Indeed, the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow! It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before God no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 22:1-15

PASSION CHORALE

*O God, are we forsaken? Why turn from us your eyes?
Why cease to feel our anguish, or hear our plaintive cries?
The ones who came before us found merit for their trust!
While we, despised, tormented, are cast into the dust!*

*With scorn our foes deride us, their taunts our faith would move!
Yet firm is our conviction, deep rooted in your love!
O God, our sure salvation, be near us all our days!
Whatever may befall us, remain our strength always!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MARK 10:17-31

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone! You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder! You shall not commit adultery! You shall not steal! You shall not bear false witness! You shall not defraud! Honor your father and mother!’” He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing! Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven! Then come, follow me!” When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the realm of God!” And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the realm of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the realm of God!” They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God! For God all things are possible!” Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first!”

The Gospel for today!
Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Eyeing the Needle!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Hymn, No. 628

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

PRECIOUS LORD

The Concerns of the Church

The Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and
forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever! Amen.**

The Receiving of Our Gifts

The Offertory

*The Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Christ all creatures here below!
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!
Praise triune God whom we adore!*

*The Prayer of Thanksgiving

*The Closing Hymn, No. 67 *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

ST. ANNE

*The Extinguishing of the Altar Candles

*The Procession of the Light

*The Benediction and Blessing

To our guests! At your choosing, we invite you to join us in a long-standing tradition at First Congregational United Church of Christ as we form a circle, joining hands and singing together our Fellowship Song.

*The Fellowship Song *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

WORLD PEACE

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

With every step I take, let this be my joyous creed.

To take each moment and live each moment in peace, eternally!

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

The Music for Reflection

*You are invited to stand as you are able.

Lector: Steve Burrill

Ushers: Mary Lou Congdon and Susan Krivichi

The color for the Season after Pentecost is Green, symbolizing the growth and development of the Church.

Various symbols of the Trinity, such as the Trefoil and Triangle designs used in our sanctuary, remind us of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the Triune nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Parent, Child, Advocate and Comforter; Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Ordinary Time refers to that part of the Church Year that does not fall within one of the major seasons and does not observe any specific aspect of the Mystery of Christ. It consists of thirty-four Sundays in the liturgical year counted backwards from the Reign of Christ and emphasizes personal faith development and nurture, and the growth and enhancement of the Church and the churches.

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Barb Flaherty
congratulating the Chime Choir on the start of a new year.***

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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